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# THE PERIL OF OUR REPUBLIC

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A

## SERMON

Preached on the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving Day,  
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BY

JOSEPH MAY

PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA

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# THE PERIL OF OUR REPUBLIC

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*"Thus Esau despised his birthright."*—GEN. XXV : 34.

*"If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who will give you that which is your own?"*—LUKE XVI : 12.

*Scripture readings :* GEN. XXV : 27-end ; LUKE X : 25-37

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THE heart of any good citizen—of any good man—may well be heavy, it seems to me, as he surveys the condition of affairs in our nation, the events that are passing in the world.

It has been, for a long time, so much so with myself, that I have hardly had spirit to address you on public themes, important as it has been that every right-minded, every truly patriotic man should be exerting all the influence he possesses to stem the tide of dangerous tendencies which—some of them suddenly—revealing themselves and taking shape in public policy, seem to be carrying the American people headlong forward to what may be, not at once outward disaster, but inward demoralization, the profound impairment of what has been best in our national character ; the weakening, even the overthrow, of the principles on which, as a nation, we have stood, and which have given us whatever of true greatness we have manifested to the world.

I am saddened beyond expression at the spectacle of our great free nation feverishly yielding itself to the guidance of ambitious men, tempted by the opportunity of territorial aggrandizement at the cost even of honor ; by commercial greed, and by the cheap illusions, discredited throughout the ages, of military glory ;—plunging on in a career of conquest opposed to our fundamental maxims and our best interests, and consenting to use our gigantic

power to trample upon an unoffending people, whom the pretence of a legal bargain with former oppressors had placed, formally, under subjection to us; consenting to ravage their land, to destroy their humble wealth, to butcher their population, and, as it has been well expressed, "to efface what civilization they had hitherto attained." This, instead of rejoicing to act as their liberators from oppression; sympathizers in their aspirations for independence and the free institutions we enjoy; their helpers in building up orderly self-government, according to the principles on which our own is based.

My heart aches for that humble people, victims, for centuries, of a cruel despotism, who, just as the light of hope began to shine upon them, found themselves transferred to the un pitying, murderous domination of a people in whom they had a right to confide as their liberators, their friends, their disinterested benefactors! I know in history of no disappointment more acute and cruel than that which they must have experienced.

It has been as if the Samaritan of Jesus's parable, on whom the glazing eyes of the half-dead wayfarer fell in hope of succor, had turned upon the victim of the other robbers, stripped him of what few remnants of his raiment they had left, beaten him afresh, and made him his slave!

If the blood of righteous Abel cried to heaven against his assassin brother, so does every drop cry out which our fratricidal hands have shed on those sunny islands of the East.

But, more than for the physical miseries of that poor people, the murder of their men, the balking of their public hopes, I lament with tears, the reflex injury we are inflicting upon the great republic of America,—the republic of Washington, of Franklin, of Lincoln.

Unless what we are doing is speedily repudiated by the better sense of our people; unless we unitedly disclaim the pretensions our political leaders are making; and do this in virtue of the principles of our own Constitution, in vindication of the great principles of our Declaration of



Independence,—the reaction upon ourselves will be a world calamity far more profound and wide-reaching than the crushing out of the aspirations of a new people could possibly be.

The one greatest, most vigorous, most hopeful experiment in self-government which the world has thus far seen is threatened at its foundation. We cannot have two sets of principles, my friends, the one for ourselves, the other for subject populations. He who is false, does not love truthfulness; he who is unjust does not revere justice. If we flout the principle of self-government in another people, we shall not maintain our respect for it in our own. Like base coin, lower principles always drive out higher. What we sow in the distant islands of the sea, we shall reap here on our own soil. By our consent to subjugate other men, we declare our renunciation of the root principle of political freedom. And we cannot persevere in a career of oppression, no matter how decently veiled by the orderly system of administration which we may put in practice, without the loss of real faith in those truths which have underlain our institutions and have been a noble inspiration to us, throughout our past.

What pains and alarms me most to-day are the indications of the decay of such faith among us already. Or, rather, the indications that that faith *has not been*, as we supposed it, deep and real. At the first serious temptation, we betray our want of it,—our infidelity to the principles in which we have formally gloried. How painful is the spectacle when a trusted employé of some great business firm is discovered to have betrayed his trust; when some respectable official is discovered to have leagued himself with criminals. This community has been sickened lately by such revelations. How much more terribly sad were it, should a whole people be found inappreciative of great truths which have for centuries shined brightly before them; false to principles which have made themselves great and happy; ready to trample on their generous traditions; contemp-

tuous of the fame, the characters, the glowing words, the solemn warnings of their greatest men, through whose fidelity and sacrifices and loyalty to truth, the fabric of their own security and prosperity was founded and reared !

It is the dread lest this turn out to be true that is so ominous at this moment. This is a crisis of self-revelation for us, profounder than that of 1860. Our virtue as a people is being tested far more searchingly than then, and one shrinks from the issue. As when some disease is discovered in the constitution of a powerful man, and the surgeons cannot tell how far it has proceeded, or whether it is possible to arrest it.

Observe distinctly, my dear friends, that, as in the individual so in a people, *it is principles that sustain us*, that make us what we are ; that are, therefore, the bulwark of our institutions, the source of national character and national security.

Certainly, you recognize this in the individual. Watch two young men setting out in life. Have you confidence that the career of the one is to be successful, secure, full of reward for himself and advantage to his generation ? Do you look on the other with anxiety, do you feel that he is likely to make shipwreck of his life ; that his career is to be one of disaster and misery ?

*Why* either such forecasting of the future ? Why, simply that, in the one, you have discerned the presence of deeply-fixed *principles*—a profound addiction to the right, honor, firmness, purity, love of the good, and the purpose to walk in the ways of goodness. His *principles*, you say—that is, the fundamental views and motives which, lying at the base of character, already control him, and govern all he thinks and feels and does,—all he *is*,—are right, are noble ; are those out of which a good life, a wise life, a successful life, naturally arises, as a good tree comes from a wholesome seed.

If you foresee disaster for the other, it is because you see such worthy, safe, principles to be *deficient* in him ; you discern false and corrupt principles to be the ones which already animate him. Selfishness, the love

of pleasure, impure affections, vicious tendencies, appear in him, and you know just where these are likely to lead him.

In our private lives, how often we mark these contrasts in the characters of the young; and how distinctly they are often verified; how surely fundamental virtues or vices of character produce their legitimate fruits!

But the same is, without qualification, as true of communities of men. The fruit is as the seed. The pervasive thoughts on essential points which live in the hearts of the body of citizens *make the State what it is*.

Nor is this true of *free* peoples, only, though of them conspicuously.

Almost all nations but our own are dominated by systems of government which, inherited from centuries in past, control the populations and hold them in subjection. But this is simply because those populations lack instinctive conceptions of their natural rights. It is because they are accustomed to subjection to certain governing classes; because they *accept* the order into which they are born; that is, because the principle of the subserviency of the individual to an aristocratic or despotic order is fully established in their minds; that autocracies exist for a day. The idea of the right of certain families to rule a population—what was once called “the divine right of kings,”—the principle of loyalty which held the feudal system together and kept it potent for centuries in Europe—it is these moral forces which still make such governments as that of Germany, of Russia, of Turkey possible to-day.

If it were practicable to infuse, in a wonderful moment, throughout the whole population of Europe, the elements of feeling which pervade our own population as to the natural rights of individuals; if, for the submissive temper of the European citizen, we could substitute, suddenly, the independence of the American, despotic regimes would crumble in a night. Standing armies would have no power before the universal influence of the principles which have been operative here. There



might be one brief and dreadful struggle, but the issue would be absolutely certain. The suddenly infused force of independent individual manliness, constrained a moment, would burst like an earthquake and the whole structure of despotism would be blown to pieces.

Any *lapse* in the positive influence of the genuine principles of political freedom tends, of course, exactly the other way. Our citizens are what they have been, our political order is what it is, because there has been, on our soil as never on any other, a profound consciousness of the dignity of manhood; of the sanctity of the individual; of his right to be free; and much more than that — *the sense that in him lies the original source of all governmental power*. This sense is constitutionally ingrained in us; it is a fundamental fact of self-consciousness. It is the very foundation-principle of the American political character. It has made us what we are. It contrasts the American citizen with every other under the sun. Only the British citizen approaches ours in the all-pervasive influence and the formative power which this principle has exerted; and even he falls short, in no small degree, of our own.

Whence did this potent, this magnificent sense of his own dignity come to the American citizen?

It is the fruit of many more centuries of struggle and progress than have passed on our own soil. The germs of it were far back in the nature of those Germanic races, whom Tacitus describes and praises. It was present when our barbaric Saxon ancestors met, not without their arms, in their popular assemblies, to make their own laws. It was fostered through all the struggles of our British forefathers against the oppressions of their kings. John Hampden was an embodiment of it. It was still more deeply stimulated under the conditions of our early ancestors in this country. Finally, it was entrenched in our national character by the events which divorced us from the mother country, and actually established our political independence.



And, my friends, it was formulated by our fathers in one immortal sentence. Twelve words, which it is cheap metaphor to call golden, gave to the world our statement of it, which it has been our highest glory to have maintained—"ALL GOVERNMENTS DERIVE THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED."

What a simple affirmation! What is it but this, that men's property in themselves, *politically*, is as real as their property in themselves *personally*. Men own their institutions, their franchise of directing their own social affairs, as naturally, as completely, as surely, as they own their persons, or as they own their homes and chattels.

How simple! how "self-evident!" But ah! through what ages of moral and of physical struggle, mankind came to the consciousness and to the vindication of this fundamental principle of right social organization!

Immortal city, this, in which that God-inspired affirmation was first traced by the prophetic hand of an American statesman! Eternal charter of liberty! axiom of all true government to the end of time!

These words were the revelation of the dignity of the individual, as the true source of political institutions, of all the functions of government forever and ever. They may be obscured to a generation; the nation which grew out of them may perish for its infidelity to them, but they are in the world, they can never more be blotted out, and if *we* fail in our allegiance, some people, truer, wiser, braver, nobler than we, shall inherit them and illustrate them in their strength and beauty, as the formative principle of the perfect social order for which the world has been groaning and travailling since humanity came into being.

I say that it is the presence in their minds and hearts of one great, true principle of thought and feeling, one fundamental *conviction*; it is the observation and recognition of one great *truth*, which has made Americans what they are. We have been born with it; as children we were taught it; it has been in the air which, as citizens,

we have breathed. It has constituted the ideal of political organization with which we have all been familiarized, and with no other.

"ALL GOVERNMENTS DERIVE THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED."

Abraham Lincoln paraphrased the words in others homely, but immortal:

"GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE."

This is to say that, in this most privileged of all the countries of the earth, we have—not government, properly,—but self-government.

No external will presses upon us as a political community. The will of the people expresses itself in the administration of common affairs—that is all.

We have not *government*, properly, but *administration*. Direction of the affairs of the people, for the people; by them as represented by their chosen officials. Our law-makers, our administrative officials are our *servants*, not our *masters*.

It does not seem possible that the theory of a political order should rise higher than this, which we have actually realized in our institutions.

But the finer the instrument, so much the finer and truer must be the mind and hand which direct it.

And, alas! it is the effect of familiarity with all precious things to dull the sense of their high value.

What the fathers struggle for, with pains unspeakable, what they sacrifice and die for, becomes the orderly possession of their children. It is a matter of course. It becomes *commonplace*. They cease to inspect it; they fail to probe its deep meanings; they may cease to value it as deeply as their fathers did. *Silently, allegiance to great truths lapses in men's prosperous days.*

Then, insidiously, *other* principles, selfish interests, low purposes, luxury, sloth, infect their minds. False ambitions possess their souls. These are incompatible with the higher and finer truths which have prevailed, which

are the very basis of a people's prosperity and greatness, and actually the bulwarks of their strength. As they gain force in degenerate minds, the nobler principles lose it. Men cannot serve God and Mammon. Eager for wealth or pleasure, immersed in selfish affairs, men become insensible to invasions of their most precious attributes. Distracted by false ideals, by the cheap glamor of military glory, by the temptations of power and national aggrandizement, a nation does not observe that the bed-rock of its strength is being insidiously undermined. The administrators of a free people's power grasp that power for their own purposes; they prostitute it for purposes hostile to the ideals of freedom. And the people, seeing outward greatness, hearing the reverberations of outward successes, the plaudits, the huzzas, do not notice that their power—their *right in themselves*—is slipping from their hands. They become accustomed to usurpations. They lose that jealousy of their rights in which is their security. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," it was said. They have been so free, they are so great, the sun shines so brightly, their fleets and armies are so magnificent and irresistible, that vigilance is relaxed. They are so great that they feel superior to principles. What they will, they may do—and who shall say them nay? What power can overpower theirs?

None, *external*, very likely. Was there any power greater than Assyria—*once*? or than Egypt—*once*? or than Rome—*once*? But where are they to-day, or have been for thousands of years? The strength even of despotisms is *within*. Much more the strength and security of free peoples.

If we lose internal virtue—if we lose the clear, intellectual apprehension of our fundamental principles—if we fail in ardent love of our ideal institutions, we are *absolutely certain* to decline. We shall even go to pieces the more surely, *because* the fabric of free institutions is finer, is more delicately organized, depends on nicer direction than the brute might of despotisms requires.

My friends, my fellow-citizens, if we let ourselves *get used* to bad administration of government; to corrupt political practices; to usurpations by our national Executive; to the control of our political affairs by the local despots whom we call "bosses;" if we come to look on, without indignation and revolt, as the methods of our suffrage are sweepingly abused, our elections falsified, the will of the people nullified, it must be that the fibre of our self-respect as free citizens is being relaxed. It shows that we are ceasing to value the franchise of free citizenship. We are approaching the point of *indifference* to free-citizenship. Like the Romans of the imperial period, like the citizens of modern autocracies, we are becoming content with personal comfort and ease, with outward order, with "bread and games," and are becoming willing to let our public affairs be managed by others—that is, we are becoming willing not to govern ourselves, but to let others govern us. In a word, we are *becoming willing to submit to despotism*.

My friends, these are no idle fears. The portents are perfectly plain in the condition of our affairs and the visible spirit of our people at this hour. As to the condition of our institutions, it is not merely true that self-government is in peril in this country; in this great commonwealth, unworthy, to-day, to bear the name of its founder, self-government has for the time *lapsed*. In this and other great States, self-government is in abeyance. *We do not govern ourselves*. We cannot, as things are, govern ourselves. The power is taken away from us. Our right in ourselves has been stolen. The machinery of government is in the hands of unscrupulous, vile men, who use it for their own purposes, not as *our* agents. This State is governed, not by its own people, but by ONE BAD MAN, who is as completely our *despot*, as was Tiberius Cæsar at Rome, or Lorenzo di Medici in Florence, or—and indeed more irresponsibly such—than the Tsar of Russia, or even the Sultan of Turkey is to-day. This is the bare, literal, patent fact,



which everybody knows, which our public journals declare and illustrate every day.

What an election,—that occasion on which the people of a free community are invited to express their will,—what such an occasion is, in our own city, let the leading paper of the city describe in words which I quote from a recent issue: "*It is a gigantic, systematic fraud and criminal conspiracy; a flagrant debauchery of the ballot; and a means to the end of disfranchising honest voters. An election in this city is a crime against the most sacred right of the people; schemed, promoted and executed by public officials; and not detected, exposed, interfered with or hindered by that department of the municipal government, the especial duty of which it is to detect offenses against the law.*"

Certainly, when the leading journal of a great city, noted for its moderation and sobriety, adopts such language, it is time for earnest citizens to stop and reflect. I know of no crisis of demoralization in any ancient or modern commonwealth which could have been depicted in stronger colors.

Yet all this, as a present fact, would be as nothing were the spirit of our citizens what it should be. These corruptions and abuses would be swept away like chaff before the sudden blast of a noble spirit of free citizenship.

The portentous thing is that our people nowadays *acquiesce* in this prostitution of our institutions. It is universally acknowledged that it is the indifference of respectable citizens that makes these corruptions possible; and hence—as the journal I quoted has, with noble insistence, daily urged—that is the true *source* of these corruptions. On last election day, when there was a critical occasion to protect the interests of the State by patriotic voting, I believe there were as many as two hundred thousand voters of the city who cared so little for the public welfare and their own fundamental right as to stay away from the polls altogether. The organization in the city which stands for good government, and labors

nobly to promote it, was sustained, in its candidates, by about *one vote in thirty* of those cast.

Is this the country of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson? Is this the city of Benjamin Franklin? *No*, my friends—not so. The hearts of those great men would break to look upon the degradation of their descendants, and to see how they value the principles and institutions bequeathed to them.

What is the *next* step, when a people lose their civic *virility*; lose regard for their political rights; become contented to be rich and sleek, and comfortable, and let popular institutions take their chances?

In Europe, it has been a short one. The *man on horseback* is usually close at hand. Some Augustus, veiling his despotisms, as the modern “boss” does, under the dead forms of free government, makes all things smooth and pleasant. The people have their games, his court is splendid, the poets sing his name; *his Prætorian Guard is at the Nomentan gate*. Some Napoleon, infatuating the people with the despicable vanity which the soldier calls “glory,” leads them through seas of their own and their brothers’ blood, to anarchy, exhaustion, foreign domination, back to monarchy.

With us the way might be longer. Disunion; civil broils; anarchy; but always despotism at the end. *Our* “man” may not come on horseback; he may be too little a gentleman to know that art; but he will come; rather he is here, and daily extending his toils; more and more completely controlling our electoral machinery; levying blackmail on the official class, even on our school teachers; making even the judges of a great city pay huge sums for their election;—he is here, already, my friends; you are his slaves to-day; base, crafty, cynical; personally vile with every vice; he has you tied hand and foot already. And if not you to whom I speak, your respectable fellow-citizens, like you, not only fail to rise in revolt against him, but they go, at each election day, in supple crowds like those which thronged

the steps of Cæsar, to cast their ballots for their deeper enslavement.

“O tempora! O mores!”

So Cicero cried, as he looked on just such scenes, as the Roman Republic tottered to its fall.\*

The life of institutions is *principles*. When principles lose their power in human hearts, when men cease to care for their political rights, their property in themselves, politically, the forms of self-government may linger on, as they did for centuries at Rome, but the reality will be gone out of them—as it is going out of them here.

Just in these sorrowful times, as by a trying visitation of Providence, the worst *other* evil that could happen to a free people has descended upon us. We have been tempted into a career of warfare and conquest, the beginning of which was wilful and needless, and therefore wicked; the progress of which has betrayed us into a position where the dangers of our polity are intensified many-fold. I will say no more of our brutal inhumanity, our unfeeling, contemptuous hardness of heart toward a feeble sister-people who had longed toward our own ideals. The God of Justice will be their avenger. Alas, the penalty may sink into the very heart of our institutions, threatened so deeply already by our infidelity to principle, our civic supineness, our political vices. War is the grand corruptor of peoples, because its exigencies require the extinction of all other considerations than immediate success. “In war, the laws are silent,” was

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\* A distinguished writer in a recent number of the “Contemporary Review,” 6f London, speaks as follows:

“In the United States of America we see the intoxication of the new strong wine of warlike glory carrying a great democracy off its feet, and raising the threatening spectre of militarism, with its fatal attendant, Cæsarism, in the background. Under the pretext of ‘manifest destiny,’ the great republic of the western hemisphere is becoming unfaithful to the principles of her founders, to the precedents of her constitutional life, to the traditions which have made her free, glorious, and prosperous. The seductions of imperialism are drawing the United States toward the abyss wherein all the great democracies of the world have found their end.”—FRANCIS DE PRESSENSÉ.

the old adage. Every institution, every principle, is put in jeopardy, while the doors of Janus stand open. As every virtue is prostituted by the campaigning soldiery, so every right of the people is threatened at home. The first to go is *free speech*; the free citizen—in war time—must withhold his honest opinions, lest opponents be encouraged. He may not even be entrusted—in war time—with the facts of what is doing; he must accept only what the administration, through its censors, chooses to put forth as fact. Perverted patriotism calls on all persons to support—in war time—our political agent, the administration, no matter how dangerous its policy may be. A false sentiment of national honor declares—in war time—that no matter how mistaken, our acts may have been, once done, they may not be undone. Once committed, by our representatives in the Cabinet or the field, to an unjust course, we must—in war time—persevere, though thousands of lives are to be sacrificed to the Moloch of our pride. The usurpations of the Executive shall be condoned—in war time—because they are in the line of the inflamed passions of the multitude, eager for victories. We have actually been conducting a desolating war for many months, under the mere authority of the Executive, although to Congress only belongs the prerogative of warfare, and Congress could have been called together at any moment. The same official issued his proclamation declaring our sovereignty over a huge archipelago and millions of people weeks before even the form of a bargain between us and their former oppressors had been ratified by the Senate.

Thus is the very genius of *militarism* hostile to *republicanism*. Its spirit, its vital necessity, is *the subserviency of the individual*; the precise antithesis of that spirit of individual independence which has been our high distinction as a people.

A free nation hardly emerges from the most defensible war without the diminution of individual rights, and an expansion of the prerogatives of the Executive. Our civil war greatly promoted the centralization of the national



government and the effective power of the President. We have been distinctly a less democratic people since that terrible exigency was upon us.

Lower tendencies coöperate. Warfare awakens and intensifies the principle, dangerous in republics, of loyalty to individual leaders; it makes popular admiration of successful soldiers heated and indiscriminate. In the *hysteria* which accompanies military successes, the incidents of the normal order of peaceful life look tame, and the particulars of political organization seem insignificant. The lawgiver, the moralist, the plain good citizen, are unimpressive; the soldier, with his plumes and tinsel, captivates the masses and they will let him tread on their rights—and on themselves.

These things *we are realizing to-day*. They descend upon us, I have said, just when our internal political condition is diseased and debilitated to a degree which is, in itself, sufficient to excite the deep anxiety of a thoughtful citizen. Their particular fruits are visible. The first step\* in the extension of our power over distant lands and unassimilable peoples, which had been steadily and emphatically refused by our Congress in the deliberate days of peace, was carried out, in a moment, under the excitement of war. Unhappily brought, by war, into contact with a feeble but spirited people, with whom we were at peace and in practical alliance, a chance collision of outposts initiated hostilities with our allies, which a rude soldier—unauthorized, *or authorized*—urged relentlessly on until it has taken the dimensions of a devastating invasion. Our President, who a year before had declared that a war for conquest, by us, would be a crime against humanity; who less than a year ago averred that “no imperialistic designs lurk in the American mind,”† has recently declared that the territory of those unconquered islands had become, by purchase from their oppressors, “as much ours as the soil of Louisiana or

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\* The annexation of Hawaii.

† Boston speech, February, 1899.

Texas"; and our nation, to which so lately the idea of foreign complications had seemed radically abhorrent, now clearly appears to sanction, by its majorities, the incorporation of remotest territories, against the will of their inhabitants, and as our subjects, not as our fellow-citizens; an act of robbery as barefaced, and infinitely wickeder, than that of the city burglar, who invades your house by night, or of those thieves upon the Jericho road. For he who steals your purse, steals trash; but he who steals your political rights robs from you a possession, far more intimately yours than money or raiment—a very part of your own manhood, sacred, divine, inalienable.

Thus, while battle smoke fills the air, our fundamental truths are obscured to our vision. Then, amidst the haze, as men begin to lapse from high principle, they instinctively seek to veil their infidelities under figments that wear its guise, or seem to explain it away. "Of what profit shall this birth-right be to me?" says cowardly Esau. Sophistries fill the air, perverting judgment and justifying infidelity to high ideals—ingenious half-truths, which deceive the unwary and even their own shallow authors. We hear of "the strenuous life," not meaning the life of arduous, moral service, based on justice, filled with magnanimity and directed by benevolence, but that of brute energy, whose chosen type is the Western cowboy, which delights in broils and battle-fields, and nerves its votaries to shoot down fellow-men "like rabbits." We hear of "the white man's burthen;" meaning, not his self-sacrificing promotion of the civilization of humbler races by the patient arts of peace, education and religion, but conquest and rapine, the spoliation of their homes, the robbery of their natural rights, as precedent to domination over them. A prominent preacher of—as we thought—religion, adopting the principle of Mohammed, has had the hardihood to declare that, to convert barbarians to Christianity, we must first conquer them with fire and sword.

Most strikingly of all, as a token of our declining fidelity to our ideals, the very word "imperialism," which a

century, or half century, ago would have raised a riot in any American community, is now freely accepted and flaunted as expressive of our policy.

Forty years ago, a clever, unscrupulous pettifogger insulted the conscience of the nation and brought on himself widespread opprobrium, by sneering at the immortal axioms of the Declaration of Independence as "glittering generalities."

Certainly it intimates how far the decay of political faith has gone in us that, recently, the vile phrase has been disinterred—by what ghouls I know not—from the dirt-heaps under which it was buried by the indignation of a former generation, and is now freely employed to discredit the intuitions of the founders of our republic and undermine the civic religion of their descendants!

My friends, these are the portents of the hour. Would to God they might pass away!

But as the day arrives when we are summoned by custom and the Executive to gather and give thanks to Almighty God for all his mercies, how can we come into his courts to praise him unless we bring in our hands the sacrifices of penitence for our shortcomings, our sins, as a people, and honest resolutions of amendment? No nation on earth was ever more highly blest, in outward gifts, and above all in the revealed truth of high ideals, which great men gone organized into our noble institutions.

Can we venture to thank God for any of his bounties, if, in our hearts, we are despising the best and greatest of his gifts, and trampling upon them in the persons of other men, our brethren, his equal children?

If we have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give us—who shall preserve to us—that which is our own?

